

PROPOSAL PREPARED FOR

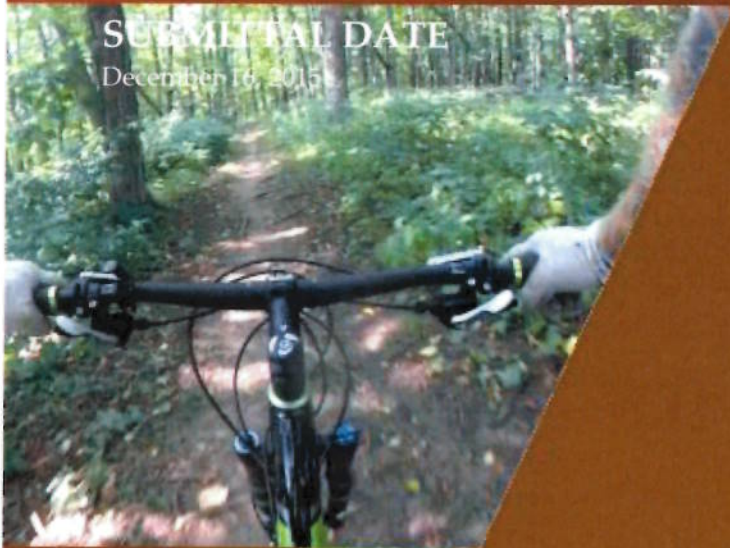
State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Blue Mound State Park – Master Plan Amendment
Paul Zajackowski
Parks District Supervisor
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POINT OF CONTACT

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SUBMITTAL DATE

December 16, 2015



**BLUE MOUND
STATE PARK**

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Letter of Transmittal	3
CORP Proposal – Blue Mound State Park	5
Partnership with Friends of Blue Mound State Park.....	7
Project Priorities and Objectives.....	1
The Plan.....	1
Timing	1
Key Personnel	2
Blue Mound State Park Trail Stewards	2
Professional Trail Builder – Contractor	2
Over Lode Trail	4
Description.....	4
Objectives	5
The Beginner Loop	8
Description.....	8
Goals	9
Funding	9
Approval	10
Holy Schist	11
Description.....	11
Goals and Implementation Plan	11
Pokerville Trail Loop	13
Description.....	13
Goals and Implementation Plan	13
Miscellaneous Tasks.....	14
Invasive Species	14
Signage & Mapping	14
Toolshed	14
Estimated Costs	15
CORP History	17
CORP Leadership.....	18
Trail Stewards.....	19
Blue Mound State Park Trail Stewards	19



State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Blue Mound State Park Master Plan Amendment Proposal

Volunteer Base Training & Experience	20
International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)	20
CORP's History of Volunteering at Blue Mound State Park	21
Volunteering at BMSP	23
Why Singletrack	25
Mountain Biking	25
Economic Impacts of Mountain Biking	26
Trail Running	27
Winter Biking	28
What is Good Fat-Bike Trail Grooming?	28
Width	29
Firmness	29
Trail Texture and Fixing the Trail	30
Proposal Preparation & Disclaimer	31



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Paul Zajackowski
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3911 Fish Hatchery Road
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RE: Blue Mound State Park – Master Plan Amendment

Dear Mr. Zajackowski,

On behalf of Capital Off Road Pathfinders (CORP), please allow me to present my organization's proposal for the future of singletrack Mountain Bike trails in Blue Mound State Park (BMSP) and extend our commitment to continuing a mutually beneficial partnership between BMSP and CORP. We have enjoyed our discussions regarding the future of BMSP and are pleased that our goals align with the goals of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

Any questions you may have regarding this proposal should be directed to:

Name:	Walter Hougas
Title:	Trail Steward – Blue Mound State Park
Telephone:	608 228-9977
Email:	hougaswd@aol.com

The following pages will outline our comprehensive plan for the future of mountain biking at BMSP; provide details on our organization as well as an overview of the economic and intrinsic benefits of singletrack trails. Our successes each year not only show our organizations growth but also reflect communities' increasing interest in becoming involved with mountain biking and human powered park improvements and creation of new parks in Wisconsin.

After care review and consideration of the proposed Master Plan Amendment we respectfully submit the following requests:

- CORP requests that the DNR reconsider its proposal to close Over Lode trail due to ecological concerns. We acknowledge that the issues under consideration by the DNR fall outside the scope of this proposal.
- CORP requests that the DNR acknowledge that this proposal meets all the trail maintenance and design concerns raised by Mr. Jeff Prey at the Stakeholder meeting on Nov. 30, 2015 and asks the DNR to stipulate these concerns are the entirety of trail layout and current maintenance issues that would prevent the DNR from allowing Over Lode trail to remain open.



- CORP requests on-site review of the proposed changes for the Beginner Loop independent of final approval of the new amendment. Early review by DNR personnel is critical to ensure that professional work begins as soon as weather permits in 2016 if our shared goal of completing the top trail work priorities in two years is to be met.
- CORP requests that the DNR stipulate that the trail mileage cap for mountain bike trails will be adjusted upward to allow the construction of Pokerville Trail as it is currently proposed and that this project remains approved in addition to keeping Over Lode Trail open
- CORP proposes to vacate the trail segment named "Basalt and Pepper Bail" which is currently designated bicycle singletrack and part of Serpentine Climb Trail. The DNR may wish to keep Basalt and Pepper as a snowshoe trail. In the event the DNR wishes to abandon this trail entirely CORP will help close it permanently.
- CORP requests that the \$10,000 the DNR had proposed to use for closing Over Lode Trail is redirected toward the reconstruction of Over Lode Trail. We ask that these funds are used for restoring vacated trail segments to unbuilt condition.
- CORP notes that design details such as rollers, dips, berms, and insloped turns, and adjustments to trail out slope, are outside the scope of this document. These will be discussed at the time that an on-site inspection by DNR personnel is performed. Minor adjustments to these details during construction are normal practice and will not require additional approval by the DNR. Substantial changes to previously agreed detail features will require prior approval by DNR personnel in charge before they are built. CORP may add these features to existing trail segments in order to improve water control or bicycle traffic (flow). Minor improvements will be considered normal maintenance and not require prior approval of DNR personnel. Added features large enough to require earth moving equipment will require prior approval.

We share your passion for providing public parks, greenspace and recreational opportunities and we look forward to continuing a long and mutually rewarding relationship with the WDNR and BMSP. Should you or any of the review committee have any questions regarding this correspondence or on any aspect of our organization, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter Hougas

Walter Hougas

Blue Mound State Park Trail Steward
Friends of Blue Mound State Park Board Member

William Lorman

William Lorman

President, Capital Off Road Pathfinders



CORP Proposal – Blue Mound State Park

Mountain biking is a sustainable sport in that once a trail or trail system is made; it can be used for many years. However, natural surface primitive trails are constantly changing; whether it's a tree falling during a storm, erosion due to old fashioned trail building techniques or even the annual growth of flora in the trail corridor, these trails require maintenance. We recognize that work is required on some of the established trails within BMSP to not only improve their sustainability, but to also offer a higher quality user experience. We firmly believe our goals for trail building are in line with the DNR's objectives and expectations as we aim to:

Limit Environmental Impacts
Limit Maintenance Requirements
Avoid User Conflicts

A portion of the BMSP mountain bike trail system currently has rutting and erosion issues. These rutting conditions will only worsen unless natural drainage structures are added to move water from the trail and, in other areas; trails are re-routed for various reasons. Each year, maintenance to fix issues similar to these has occurred using volunteer labor; however, the identified issues below are larger in scope and require significantly more dirt to move in difficult (rocky) soil.

In addition to the rutting and erosion, the planned improvements involve enhancing or repairing trail where features and berms will be constructed to enhance the flow of the trail in our efforts to increase desirability and decrease skill level required to confidently ride the trail.

Trail work at BMSP is typically completed by volunteer labor. In a typical year, approximately 450 hours of labor is organized by CORP to maintain and improve the trails at BMSP. Of this total, only about 200 hours are available for tasks such as those listed in the tables below, and the identified four project areas would require over 6,000 hours to complete. Many of the tasks cannot reasonably be completed by manual labor due to the soil conditions and type of project. If volunteer labor was used exclusively we estimate that the entire project would not be completed until 2,029.

If our proposed plan for utilizing machine building with a professional contractor is accepted, we anticipate project completion for the Beginner Loop in 14 to 16 weeks and anticipate completion of both priority project areas, Beginner Loop and Over Lode Trail (if approved) to be completed in two years.

A professional contractor using a mini-excavator is the ideal solution to fix the current erosion issues and enhance the trail. A mini-excavator is more productive than manual labor and is a highly cost-effective way to complete the tasks in a shorter time frame. In addition, using a professional contractor and machine building typically generates excitement within the volunteer community which translates into additional volunteer labor created by the excitement of building new trails without all of the typical, back breaking manual labor required.



CORP has engaged in extensive volunteer run, machine trail building projects since 2012. We have worked with highly respected professional trail builders who happen to be local riders who have volunteered their personal time to trail building and design. With these efforts we have developed a volunteer base skilled in assisting the machine operator with the hand finishing of the trail. Our projects in the past two years include reconstruction at Quarry Ridge Rec Area in Fitchburg, Middleton Bike Park and Blackhawk Ski club. In our experience, machine operated trail building results in faster remediation/construction of trails, more effective implementation and better overall construction. With the amount of time required to complete this project utilizing volunteer labor is not feasible.



In addition to the dirt movement with the excavator, additional volunteer crews will be scheduled to assist with final shaping of the dirt. Excavators work very well to move large amounts of material quickly along with packing and roughly shaping the dirt into the final form, but detailed shaping is best completed manually.

This project is best served by contracting with a professional trail builder and using volunteer labor to assist with the hand work needed to finish the trail.

Blue Mounds is the best state park in the Madison area and contains the best mountain biking. Please continue to offer existing trails and expand in the future.

Michael Fitch, Waterloo, WI



Partnership with Friends of Blue Mound State Park

The non-profit Friends of Blue Mound State Park has generously committed to underwriting the costs of the machine operator labor for critical sections of the Over Lode Trail (if approved by the DNR) and has committed to underwriting the cost of the entire reconstruction of the Beginner Loop. The vote in favor of this action is recorded in the Friends of Blue Mound State Park December 12, 2015 meeting minutes. CORP will contribute additional funds plus the value of our membership volunteer time.

The Friends of Blue Mound State Park is a group of volunteers working together to benefit the park by enhancing and preserving its natural resources while offering activities and projects to improve the park guest's visit.

Past activities and contributions include:

- ✓ Contributed significantly to the pool renovation project
- ✓ Built a 2400 square foot ADA accessible all-season shelter and learning center at the trail head area of the park (see Friends Shelter page)
- ✓ Candlelight ski events
- ✓ Annual trail run fundraiser
- ✓ Annual Horribly Hilly Hundreds Bike Event fundraiser
- ✓ Interpretive signs
- ✓ Educational programs
- ✓ Park entrance sign
- ✓ Prairie/savanna clean-up
- ✓ Invasive species control
- ✓ Ski trail grooming and equipment
- ✓ Built an accessible campground cabin
- ✓ Wood splitting for firewood sales to campers
- ✓ Exhibits in the park nature center
- ✓ Trail maintenance



I am writing because of the high value I place on mountain biking at Blue Mound State Park. With mountain biking I have also supported the park in 2015 with multiple camping nights, use of the pool, and participation in the Horribly Hundreds. My connection with BMSP is based on the mountain biking there. Additionally, mountain biking in Southern Wisconsin is extremely limited. The loss of this trail would be very discouraging.

I value it greatly. Sincerely, Doug Donner

Doug Donner, Wauwatosa, WI



Project Priorities and Objectives

We have identified and prioritized four key areas of opportunity within the park trail system for rehabilitation and new trail development.

- Over Lode Trail
 - Realignments, reroutes, and improvements
- Beginner Loop
 - Rebuild existing trail to make it suitable for less experienced riders.
- Holy Schist
 - Realignments, reroutes, and improvements
- Pokerville Trail Completion

The Plan

Our goal is to complete the Beginner Loop and Over Lode trail projects by 2018. Our number one priority is to bring the Over Lode trail loop up to modern standards by making it more accessible to beginner riders and more sustainable. However, construction cannot be started until the Master Plan Amendment is finalized and approvals are granted for individual trail realignments and reroutes. Since the Beginner Loop is sited on top of existing trail segments approved under the year 2000 amendment, work can proceed on this project while the new Master Plan Amendment is finalized. In order to meet our goal to complete our top two priority project areas by 2018, the priority may shift to the Beginner Loop until the Master Plan Amendment is finalized and all approvals are obtained for Over Lode.

Shovel-Ready Spring 2016

The Beginner Loop project is situated on top of existing trail segments which were approved under the year 2000 amendment. This means work can commence on this project area while the Master Plan Amendment is finalized.

Furthermore, the Friends of Blue Mound State Park have committed to funding the entirety of this project area making it shovel ready for implementation in 2016.

Timing

Trail building in BMSP will be limited based on weather conditions. Typically we are able to begin trail construction and maintenance work in April and conclude in late fall. While most trails are ready for work in April we have experienced years where work began as early as February or as late as June. Given the current El Nino conditions it is possible the spring 2016 building season may begin as early as late February. Our projected plan is nimble and allows us to easily overcome potential impediments to project completion.



Key Personnel

Blue Mound State Park Trail Stewards

Walter Hougas serves as the CORP Trail Steward at Blue Mound State Park and holds a prestigious position as Friends of Blue Mound State Park Board Member. Walter has been a stalwart supporter of Blue Mound State Park for decades and is an avid mountain biker, winter fat biker and road cyclist. Walter is FISTA certified in chain saw safety training and has attended official IMBA trail building classes. Walter is the lead designer and construction leader for Holy Schist, Over Lode and Pokerville Trails at Blue Mound.

Gary Schweisthal serves as the Assistant Trail Steward for Blue Mound State Park. Gary has been a CORP member and volunteer at Blue Mound State Park since 2003. He is an avid mountain biker, road biker, winter biker, cross country skier and devoted father and husband. Gary is also FISTA certified in chain saw safety. Gary has been an integral part of CORP's work at BMSP including being the assistant designer and builder for Holy Schist, Over Lode and Pokerville.

Professional Trail Builder – Contractor

We are proposing to utilize a professional contractor to perform the major trail reconstruction with a machine. Contractor selection is an important part of this process as having a contractor who is experienced in building recreational singletrack trails is the key to long lasting success. Selection of an inexperienced or ineffective contractor will greatly hinder this project. Experience in singletrack trail design and construction is a must.

Travis Bellman of Travis Bellman Home and Trail has reviewed the plans, performed an onsite evaluation and has provided an estimate of costs provided later in this document. Travis is a world class trail builder who has been contracted on such prestigious projects as the WinMan Trails, Raven Trails, and Lakeland Area Mountain Bike Organization (LAMBO) trails. Travis has extensive experience in both new trail construction and reconstruction of existing trails. His trails are praised as being fun and sustainable.



With Travis's extensive experience and documented success we believe he is an ideal match for this project. To learn more about Travis or to view pictures and video of his work we encourage you to visit:

www.facebook.com/Travis-Bellman-Home-And-Trail

www.facebook.com/WinManTrails



WinMan Trail





Over Lode Trail

Description

Over Lode is a multi-use trail built in 2005-2006 with support from the WI DNR, CORP, a \$10,000 grant from REI, and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor. It is situated in an area known as Pleasure Valley Woods, and is used by mountain bikers, hikers, trail runners, bird-watchers, and snow shoers. It has become a favorite for many reasons including stunning topography, taking you through steep valleys and quiet, lush forest. **We estimate its worth to be over \$100,000 if constructed today.**

In its Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Blue Mound State Park dated November 2015, the DNR proposes to close the part of Over Lode Trail near the eastern boundary of Pleasure Valley in 2016, and a section along the northern border at a later date to be determined.

The reasons given in the Draft Amendment, it's supporting Rapid Ecological Assessment, and at a meeting with CORP representatives on November 30th 2015 were:

- Some parts of the trail traverse a sensitive ecological area. The DNR declined to specify exactly what species and areas were affected, citing concerns that animal poachers could use this information as a guide to their location.
- The DNR has concerns about the trail's state of repair and its design.

"To destroy an incredible opportunity for so many to enjoy a trail constructed by volunteers and donations is absolutely ludicrous. To do so without evidence the trail closing will provide any benefit or to give the willing volunteers a chance to mitigate any negative effects of the trail is beyond belief."

Steve Statz, Waunakee, WI

Since the Draft Amendment has been made public, CORP and members of the public have contacted the DNR and asked it to reconsider the proposed closure of Over Lode trail. The DNR has not revised its statements regarding the environmental impact of the trail on the sensitive ecological area. The DNR has, however asked CORP to submit a plan to make improvements to Over Lode Trail. Mr. Jeff Prey, Program and Policy Analyst, DNR stated these specific and general concerns at the November 30th stakeholder meeting with CORP representatives:

- The descent from the north bluff to the earthen dam and bridge is heavily eroded. The trail grade is excessively steep and cannot be maintained as is.
- The grade level crossing of Ryan Creek at the south east corner of Pleasure Valley has a loose gravel base and is overall unsuitable for riders with beginner to intermediate level skills.
- The climb out from the Ryan Creek crossing is excessively steep. The trail grade exceeds 20%.
- In general, there are a number of locations with excessively steep trail grades. The IMBA standard of <10% sustained grade should be followed.
- The terrain in Pleasure Valley is defined by valleys with steep sides. Any proposed reroutes using these steep hillsides will need to show close attention to proper layout and design to be considered.



Objectives

CORP agrees with the concerns stated by Mr. Prey. We propose to meet these concerns by:

- Designing trail reroutes that will eliminate current trail segments with trail grades exceeding an average of 10%.
- Designing trail reroutes that will have a grade less than half the slope of the underlying terrain.
- The Ryan Creek grade level crossing is eliminated by routing the bike trail over part of the service road in that area, and using its bridge.
- Trails sited on steep hillsides, especially ones with terrain slopes >20%, will be made sustainable by incorporating frequent grade reversals, use of insloped turns for the switchbacks, and use of rock reinforcement where beneficial. Sustained trail grade is held between 6% and 8% for nearly the entire proposed trail.
- The use of grade reversals as a water control feature means by definition that short segments will exceed the average. Many will exceed the average trail grade limit guideline of 10% promoted by the International Mountain Bike Association. This is normal, inevitable and is in no way a design flaw.

Over Lode will be made more sustainable by rerouting all trail segments currently having excessive trail grade (which is defined by IMBA as having an average grade of more than 10%) to reduce their average grade to under 10%. Short segments exceeding 10% grade may result from incorporating grade reversals into the trail construction. This is normal and an inevitable result of using grade reversals to prevent water from running down the trail. Reducing the average trail grade will have the added benefit of making the trail more accessible to riders of various skill levels and fitness. The term "average trail grade" is used here to mean the grade for a particular feature such as a hill climb or descent. We do not misuse the term to include flat areas in order to misleadingly claim improved trail slopes.



The difficult streambed crossing of Ryan Creek has been eliminated by routing the revised trail over the service road bridge (referred to as Weeping Rock Trail in some maps) at the south eastern part of Pleasure Valley. The steep (>20% grade) climb immediately following the old grade level crossing of Ryan Creek in the same area has also been eliminated. Several short reroutes are proposed which reduce the steepness of the descent into/climb out of small ravine crossings ((insert map reference here)).

In order to reduce the trail grade in several crucial locations ((insert map reference here)), we propose to reconstruct Over Lode trail as a series of lower grade segments joined by switchback turns. Due to the terrain in these locations, the trail must be built on very steep hillsides. We propose to prevent rainwater and user erosion of the hillsides and the trail by using carefully considered trail construction techniques including:

- Trail grade will be reduced below the IMBA recommended maximum sustained trail grade of 10% to below 8% as much as possible.
- Frequent grade reversals will be incorporated into the construction.
- Switchback turns will be constructed using insloped design, with rock wall reinforcement where needed. Insloped turns have replaced the earlier IMBA rolling crown turn as the preferred design for switchback turns due to reduced labor and impact on the land. With careful attention to layout and construction, this feature can be made highly sustainable even in steep terrain.
- Trees will spared by careful routing of the proposed trail. A few trees less than 4" in diameter will be removed due to the large number present and the closeness of their spacing. Some of the trees of this size and tight spacing will eventually die due to intra-tree competition.

I have visited Blue Mound State Park and ridden the Over Lode Trail on my mountain bike. It's truly one-of-a-kind and with proper stewardship can be an integral part of the park user's experience at Blue Mound.

Please do not close this wonderful and challenging trail to mountain bikes.

David Randleman, Omaha, NE



Over Lode Trail Realignments and Reroutes

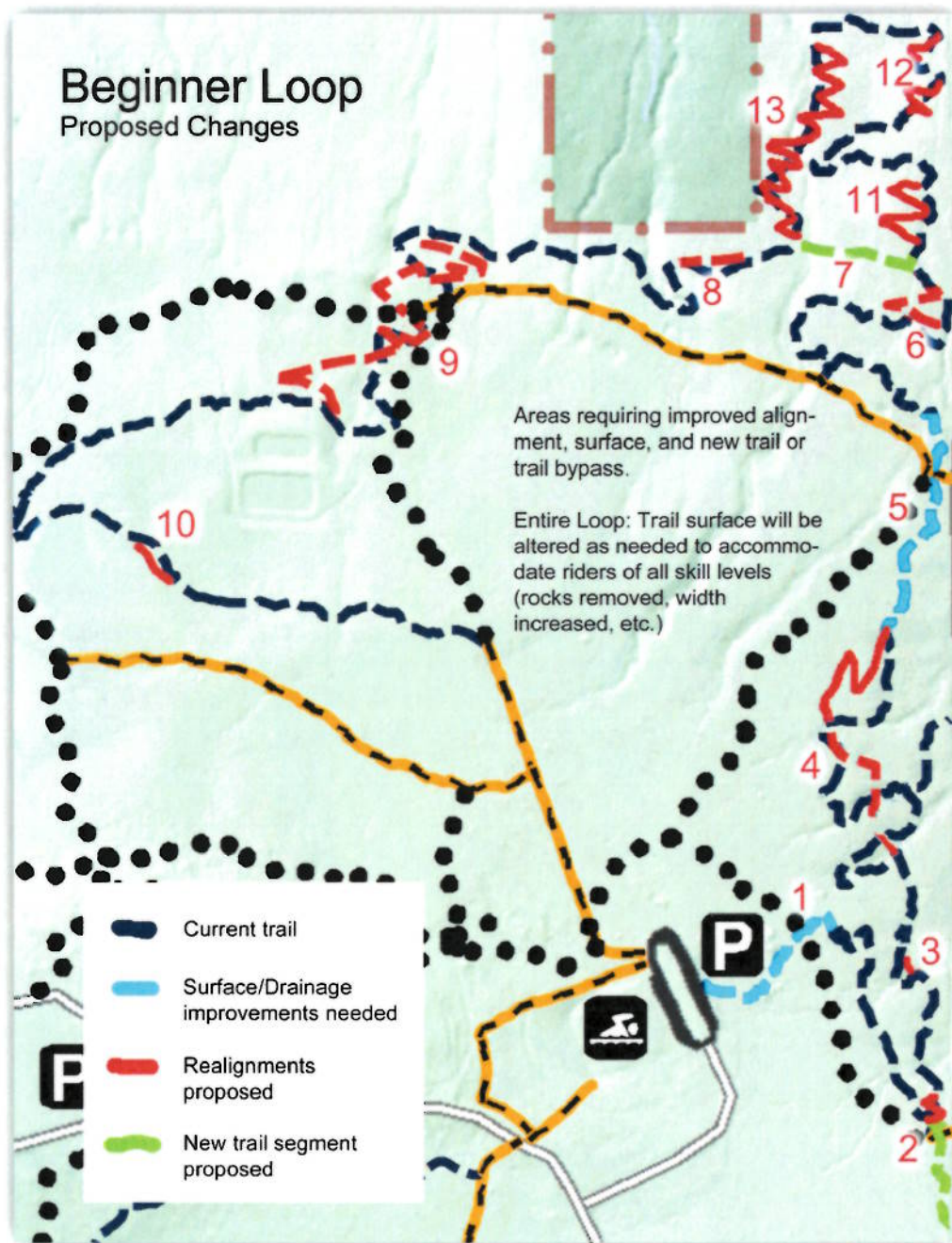
Realigned Trail Segment	Description
1	New start to Over Lode singletrack. Replaces eroded, fall line trail.
2 & 3	Short realignment of a small ravine crossing. Trail is angled up into the ravine banks resulting in a shallower trail grade.
4	Switchback descent of a steep hillside. New routing allows use of a service road bridge to cross Ryan Creek.
5	New trail completes section started by 05Dec2015 05 GPS track, picking up after a short section of service road including a bridge over Ryan Creek. The combination of tracks 05 & 06 will allow the closure of trail sited on an eroding roadbed, plus a grade level crossing of Ryan Creek over loose gravel, plus a steep climb up the north bank of the Ryan Creek ravine.
6	Realigned trail eliminates a segment containing an excessively steep climb.
7	Realigned trail eliminates an excessively steep descent.
8	Reworked switchback turn eliminates a fall line trail segment located on abandoned service road.
9	Rerouted trail segment eliminates a switchback located on abandoned service road, plus an excessively steep descent.
10	Added switchback eliminates excessively steep climb out of ravine crossing.
11	Added switchback eliminates excessively wide and steep climbing turn.
12	Realigned trail to Brigham Connector property entrance eliminates fall line climb.
13	Multiple switchback descent down steep hillside totally eliminates use of the severely eroded abandoned service road.
14	Short realignment reduces trail grade of the descent off of the abandoned earthen dam.
15	Multiple switchback climb out from the Ryan Creek Bridge eliminates extremely steep fall line trail segment.
16	Trail realignment up higher into valley follows contour line more closely, reducing the trail grade at the southern end of the valley.
17	Reducing radius of an overly wide switchback turn near abandoned quarry eliminates a fall line trail segment. The trail is moved higher on the contour of the valley, eliminating a g-out structure. Keeping high on the valley contour, and adding a switchback eliminates a fall line trail segment just before the crossing of Ryan Road.
18	Eliminates a fall line descent to the bottom of the local valley and a fall line climb out.
19	Switchback climb from road crossing eliminates fall line climb.



The Beginner Loop

Description

The Beginner Loop will consist of the singletrack trails currently named Gneiss and Smooth, Chert Dip, Serpentine Climb, Basalty Bail, and a portion of the John Minix ski and hiking trail.





Goals

These trails currently are not suitable for beginner riders because they are too narrow, have numerous exposed rocks and roots, and contain streambed crossings that are challenging even for more advanced riders. In addition, Chert Dip contains several advanced skill level rock features and rock gardens without an alternate pathway around them. Chert Dip also has several places with very steep trail grades. We will address all areas of concern and bring this trail into the beginner or intermediate trail category.

Funding

The non-profit Friends of Blue Mound State Park has generously committed to underwriting the costs of the machine operator labor for critical sections of the Over Lode Trail (if approved by the DNR) and has committed to underwriting the cost of the entire reconstruction of the Beginner Loop. The vote in favor of this action is recorded in the Friends of Blue Mound State Park December 12, 2015 meeting minutes. CORP will contribute additional funds plus the value of our membership volunteer time.



I am a skier/mountain biker, and a neighbor to Blue Mounds State Park and I value the quiet and serenity of the park. I want the DNR to work WITH cyclists, not against us. I believe the Over Lode Trail should NOT be closed.

Brenda Baker,
Madison, WI



Approval

The Beginner Loop project is sited on top of existing trail segments which were approved under the year 2000 amendment which means work can proceed on this project while the Master Plan Amendment is finalized. Furthermore, the Friends of Blue Mound State Park have committed to funding the entirety of this project area making it shovel ready for implementation in 2016.

Beginner Trail Loop Realignments and Reroutes

Trail Segment	Description
1	Trail surface to be turnpiked (removed and replaced with suitable fill)
2	Switchback installed to fix slope/erosion potential. Add new trail to accommodate new road crossing.
3	Trail realignment to fix trail slope.
4	Trail realignment to fix trail slope.
5	Trail surface to be turnpiked (removed and replaced with suitable fill), grade reversals installed
6	Switchback to fix trail slope.
7	Trail to server as beginner level bypass of intermediate/difficult section to the north
8	Trail realignment to fix trail slope.
9	Trail realignment to fix trail slope, and bypass 1 or more high-skill/difficult sections. These sections would be retained and improved to address any erosion potential
10	Trail realignment to fix trail slope.
11	Trail realignment to fix trail slope.
12	Trail realignment to fix trail slope.
13	Trail realignment to fix trail slope.

Holy Schist

Description

Holy Schist is an expert difficulty level trail. It includes the Home Stretch trail segment.



Goals and Implementation Plan

- Reroute the section of trail which crosses the property line.
- Build a maintenance/emergency trail to access the parts of Holy Schist which are most distant from the points where it can be accessed currently.
- Realign the beginning of the trail to move it up out of the flat, poorly drained areas it currently occupies.
- Reroute the section of trail immediately after it crosses Willow Springs hike/ski trail. The current trail is sited along the rim of two ravines, resulting in fall line trail.
- Reroute the steep climb at the start of Home Stretch.
- Maintain Kipp's climb as it is currently aligned by adding rock armor to control erosion.



Holy Schist Realignments and Reroutes

Trail Segment	Description
1	Trail realignment to move trail up off of flat area for better drainage
2	Trail reroute to move trail out of wet area, and eliminate fall line segments.
3	Trail realignment to move segment back inside property line.
4	Access path for emergency services.
5	Trail realignment to eliminate fall line climb.
6	Trail realignment to reduce steep trail section.
7	Add switchback to eliminate eroded trail section.

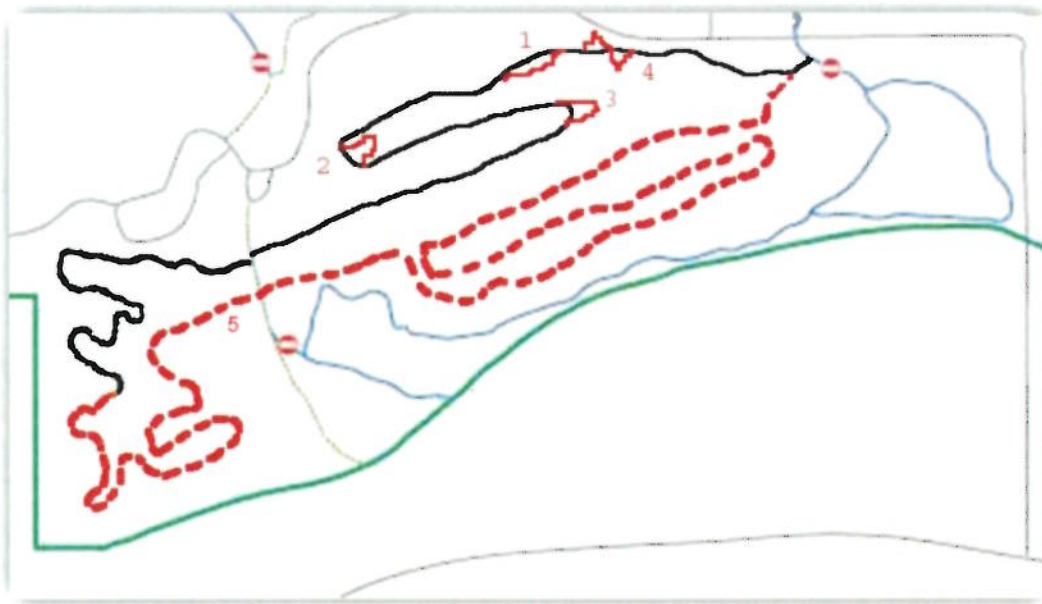
I am a cross-country skier and love the quiet of the park. It is one of the best places to ski near Madison and with excellent grooming, much of it by volunteer groomers, its winter trails hold snow until the first days of spring. Silent sports enthusiasts really love BMSP. The monies raised by Friends of BMSP through the trail runs contributed significantly to build the beautiful shelter, enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts in all seasons. Over Lode Trail is a spectacular hiking trail and shows off spectacular Iowa and Dane and Iowa County vistas. Please keep the park silent-sports friendly!

Madeline Urameck, Madison, WI

Pokerville Trail Loop

Description

Pokerville is an expert difficulty level trail. Approximately 2 miles of a projected 4.5 miles was built before work was halted in 2011 pending authorization under a new master plan amendment.



Goals and Implementation Plan

- Several small areas of existing trail need realignment to correct slope and/or mitigate erosion potential. The area south of the park garage is large enough to require a small switchback area.
- Complete the remainder of Pokerville as shown on the attached map and provided GPS. The work will be done by hand or machine if funding is obtained.

Pokerville Realignments	
Trail Segment	Description
1	Realignment to reduce slope
2	Switchback added to eliminate fall line trail.
3	Trail extended to reduce switchback radius
4	Add switchbacks to reduce trail grade
5	Complete proposed trail.



Miscellaneous Tasks

As volunteers we recognize the shrinking budgets of our park system and extend our hand of friendship to include performing miscellaneous tasks for the benefit of all park users including updating signage, mapping and invasive species eradication.

Invasive Species

Invasive Species have been called a "catastrophic wildfire in slow motion" and are a profound threat to Wisconsin's forests. We will continue our active role in halting the spread of invasive species by educating users on identification, prevention and mitigation efforts. Our volunteers are committed to helping eradicate invasive species with hands on initiatives as well as providing additional education on the correct equipment inspection and cleaning procedures and invasive species best practices.

Signage & Mapping

We will provide approved signage and mapping upon completion of project and at necessary intervals during the project as required. We will also offer to assist with updating all signage in the park including on trail signs and maps.

Toolshed

We request that the Blue Mound management follow through on its promise to replace the park's woodshed and move the original structure to the Maintenance Garage area for use as a shared storage building.

These mt bike trails and winter fat bike trails are the only reason I come to park. It is a easy drive from Madison. There are simply too few Mt trails close to Madison, it would be a tremendous loss to close any of these trails.

Tim Hacker, Madison, WI



Estimated Costs

The non-profit Friends of Blue Mound State Park has generously committed to underwriting the costs of the machine operator labor for critical sections of the Over Lode Trail (if approved by the DNR) and has committed to underwriting the cost of the entire reconstruction of the Beginner Loop. The vote in favor of this action is recorded in the Friends of Blue Mound State Park December 12, 2015 meeting minutes. CORP will contribute additional funds plus the value of our membership volunteer time.

We have received the following preliminary estimate from Travis Bellman Home and Trail for the Beginner Loop Trail Project. Despite the extremely short time period that has been given to CORP to develop a plan to reconstruct Over Lode Trail, we have already raised \$11,000 for it. This is sufficient to cover the costs of hiring Travis Bellman to construct the trail segments that would be most difficult to build by hand. CORP will seek additional funding to expedite the work, but we have the capacity to complete the job with our volunteers' labor.



State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Blue Mound State Park Master Plan Amendment Proposal

Travis Bellman Home and Trail

7408 Deerwood Rd
Minocqua, WI 54548

715-892-5140

www.facebook.com/homeandtrail

travisbellman@yahoo.com

Bill To: CORP

Phone:

Estimate 1

Address:

Fax:

Invoice Date: 11/20/2015

Email:

Contact: Walter Hoggis
William Lorman

Date	Item #	Description	Qty	Unit Price	Discount	Total
11/23/2015	1	Trail construction base /ft	8,200	\$2.75	\$0.00	\$22,550.00
	2	low out slope (<10%) /ft	5000	\$3.50		\$17,500.00
	3	Drainages each	16	\$600.00		\$9,600.00
	4	Wooden boardwalks 4 ft wide/ft	200	\$25.00		\$5,000.00

Invoice Subtotal \$54,650.00

Tax Rate 0.0%

Sales Tax \$0.00

Shipping \$0.00

Deposit Received

Total \$54,650.00

Any low outslope areas will be topped with crushed lime stone 1-4inches thick depending on thickness of duff layer.

Additionally, each natural drainage crossing will be \$600/crossing.

Boardwalks will not be subject to per foot trail cost.

Trails will be built to at least 4 feet wide and have rocks and roots removed.

Drainages will be constructed with rocks on site with the addition of imported rock and culverts where needed.

Boardwalks will be 4 feet wide, have (3)2x4 stringers resting on horizontal 6x6's every 4 feet, and have 5/4 decking; all being treated.

All distances are approximate and constructed trail will be measured with a measuring wheel. Number of drainages approximate.

Approximate build time 14-16 weeks.



CORP History

Founded in 2001, Capital Off-Road Pathfinders (CORP) is not for profit organization with a mission to advocate, develop and maintain trails for human powered, silent sport, activities at six trail systems in Southern Wisconsin including:

- Blue Mound State Park (Wisconsin State Park)
 - 12 miles of singletrack
- Cam-Rock Park (Cambridge – Dane County Parks)
 - 10 miles of singletrack
- Quarry Ridge Recreation Area (Fitchburg – City of Fitchburg)
 - 6 miles of singletrack
- Seminole Trail (Fitchburg – Dane County Parks)
 - 4 miles of singletrack
- Middleton Bike Park (City of Middleton)
 - 4 miles of singletrack
- Quarry Park (City of Madison)
 - 3 miles of singletrack
- Blackhawk Ski Club (Middleton)
 - 5 miles of singletrack



In addition to building sustainable, purpose built trails, we partner with organizations that have similar goals and work with them to improve trail access throughout the region. We are a local member driven organization with a volunteer board of directors and trail stewards tasked with the management of each individual trail system.

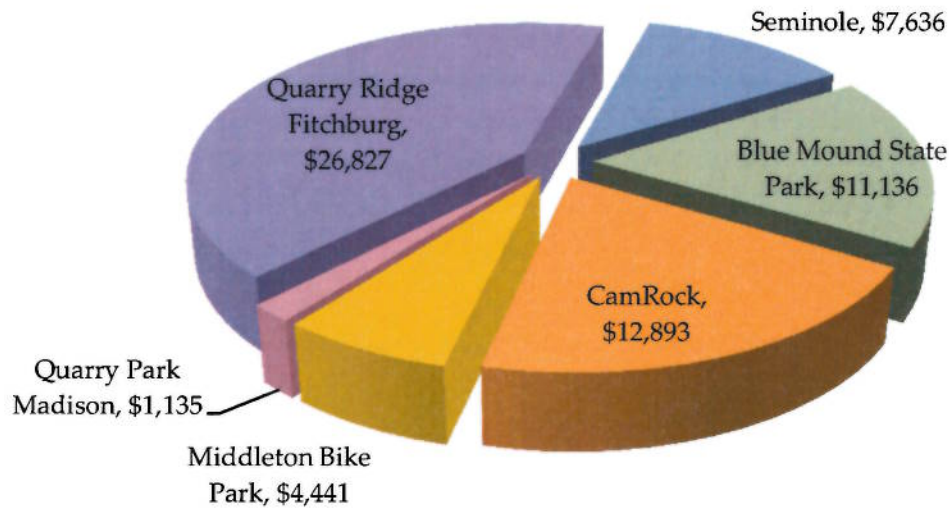
Quality trails are expensive to build and maintain; trail development can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000 per mile. To fund our trail building we rely on generous donors, fund raising events, and volunteer grant writing.



Our dedicated members participate in adopt-a-trail programs and workdays and are responsible for over 450 volunteer hours PER YEAR at BMSP alone. Since 2011 our volunteers have donated over 8,211 hours of labor to trails. That's nearly four years of full time labor and equates to the work of one full time employee for each year since 2011.



2015 Volunteer Hours



Value of Volunteer Hours at CORP managed trails.

CORP Leadership

CORP leadership consists of five elected board members, nine appointed board officers and trail stewards.

Elected Board Officers		
Title	Name	Email
President	William Lorman	president@madcitydirt.org
Vice-President – Membership	Jon Augspurger	Vp-membership@madcitydirt.org
Vice-President – Events	Tom Griesheime	VP-ops@madcitydirt.org
Secretary	Richard Schick Jr.	secretary@madcitydirt.org
Treasurer	Brian Donley	treasurer@madcitydirt.org



Trail Stewards

Our dedicated trail stewards are responsible for the management and involvement of CORP's membership in each individual trail system. Trail stewards act as liaisons with our valued land manager partners to accomplish mutual goals and ensure smooth operation of the partnership. Trail Stewards are the unsung heroes of trail building, from leading advocacy efforts to weed whacking to attending stake holder meetings, they do it all.

Appointed Board Officers	
Title	Name
Trail Steward Blue Mounds	Walt Hougas
Trail Steward Cam Rock	Chuck Hutchens
Trail Steward Quarry Ridge	Jeff Bartels
Trail Steward Middleton Bike Park	Aaron Frink
Trail Steward Quarry Park	Dan Dacko
Trail Steward Seminole Trails	Melissa Onesto
Trail Steward The Farm	Greg Haack
Technical Terrain Feature (TTF) Steward	Josh Henry
Director of Web Presence	Gary Schweisthal

Blue Mound State Park Trail Stewards

Walter Hougas serves as the CORP Trail Steward at Blue Mound State Park and holds a prestigious position as Friends of Blue Mound State Park Board Member. Walter has been a stalwart supporter of Blue Mound State Park for decades and is an avid mountain biker, winter fat biker and road cyclist. Walter is FISTA certified in chain saw safety training and has attended official IMBA trail building classes. Walter is the lead designer and construction leader for Holy Schist, Over Lode and Pokerville Trails at Blue Mound.

Gary Schweisthal serves as the Assistant Trail Steward for Blue Mound State Park. Gary has been a CORP member and volunteer at Blue Mound State Park since 2003. He is an avid mountain biker, road biker, winter biker, cross country skier and devoted father and husband. Gary is also FISTA certified in chain saw safety. Gary has been an integral part of CORP's work at BMSP including being the assistant designer and builder for Holy Schist, Over Lode and Pokerville.



Volunteer Base Training & Experience

The first CORP singletrack was built in 2001 at a time when, admittedly, we were far less knowledgeable and experienced in the ways of trail construction and design. We continue to evolve our best practices to incorporate proven techniques to be in line with accepted standards. To that end, we are committed to continuing volunteer education through our association with the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), ongoing mentorship, workdays and continuing education.

Our workforce has also changed considerably since our inception, from volunteer crews of teenagers doing community service to more mature volunteers with actual trail building knowledge to respected trail design professionals and hired professional equipment operators. With over 8,000 hours of experience since 2011 our volunteers are trained and ready to build trail. While our activities at BMSP have been limited we have been granted access at six other trail systems and our volunteers have years of consistently progressive trail building experience. We have transformed trail systems such as Quarry Ridge Recreational Area in Fitchburg from erosion plagued old style trails to new school sustainable flow trail and jump lines. In the past 2 years our organization has been responsible for building approximately 4 miles of brand new trail at Seminole Park in Fitchburg and an additional 3 miles of trail at the Middleton Bike Park at Pleasant View Golf Course and 4 miles of trail at Quarry Ridge in Fitchburg. Our efforts have garnered rave reviews from users and our land manager partners.



Historically we plan one volunteer work day or weekend for each of the trail systems we manage in the spring. As with all of our volunteer efforts these workdays are open to the public. Our club provides specialized tools, equipment and training to volunteers. Each workday begins with a safety meeting including proper use of tools and objectives for the day. Work days focus on routine maintenance tasks to ready the trails for use after the winter or on the completion of specific projects. Volunteers are split into groups and led through the work day by a trail steward or experienced volunteer. Trail stewards plan additional work days throughout the year based on individual trail projects.

International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)

We are proud to say we are part of the growing network of International Mountain Bicycling Association Chapters. Since 1988, IMBA has been bringing out the best in mountain biking by encouraging low-impact riding, volunteer trail work participation, and cooperation among different trail user groups, grassroots advocacy and innovative trail management solutions. IMBA's staff, chapters, clubs and members work to benefit the entire mountain bike community. IMBA's worldwide network includes 100,000+ supporters, 35,000+ individual members, 180+ IMBA Chapters, 300+ clubs and volunteer bike patrols, 200+ corporate partners, and 700+ retail shops. IMBA members live in all 50 states, most Canadian provinces and in 30 other countries.

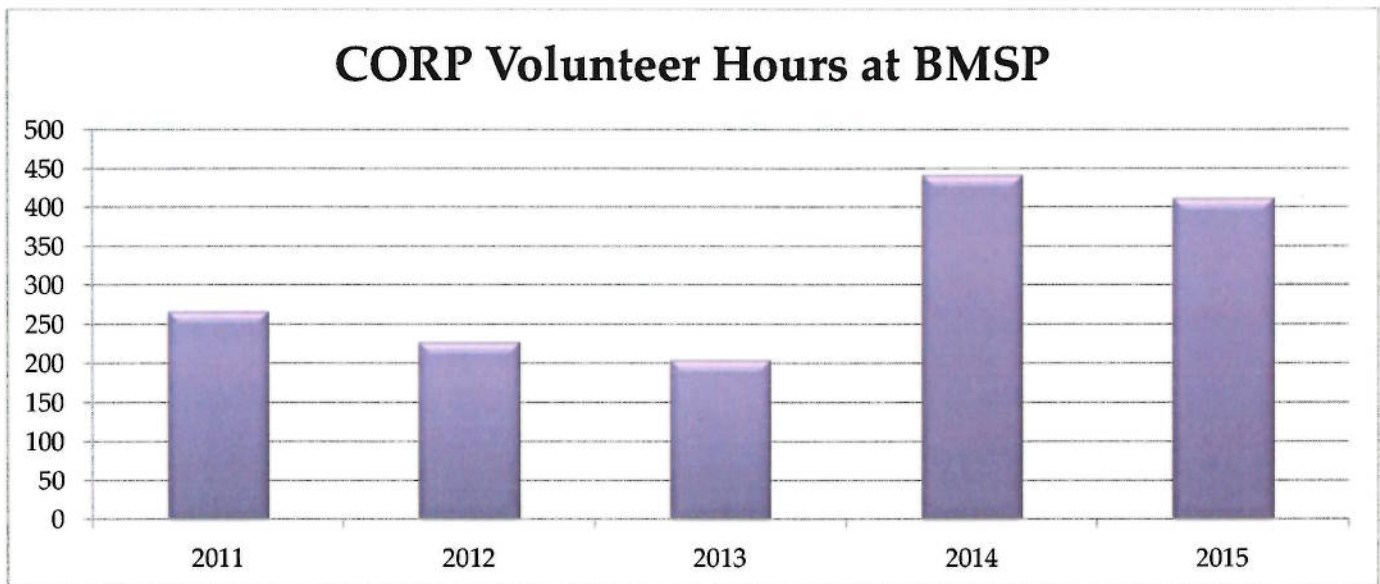


CORP's History of Volunteering at Blue Mound State Park

Mountain biking, by nature, fosters an incredible sense of community and expectation of volunteer involvement. Unlike road biking, mountain bikers must advocate and build their trails in order to ride. Mountain bikers routinely give back to their local trail systems by volunteering on public land, protecting the environment and preserving open space. The effort of mountain bikers to advocate and build trails benefits numerous user groups including hikers, trail runners and wild life viewers.

I have put a lot of time and effort into this trail over the years and it would be really sad to see it go. This trail is the best of the Midwest and the whole Midwest mountain bike scene would be at a loss...

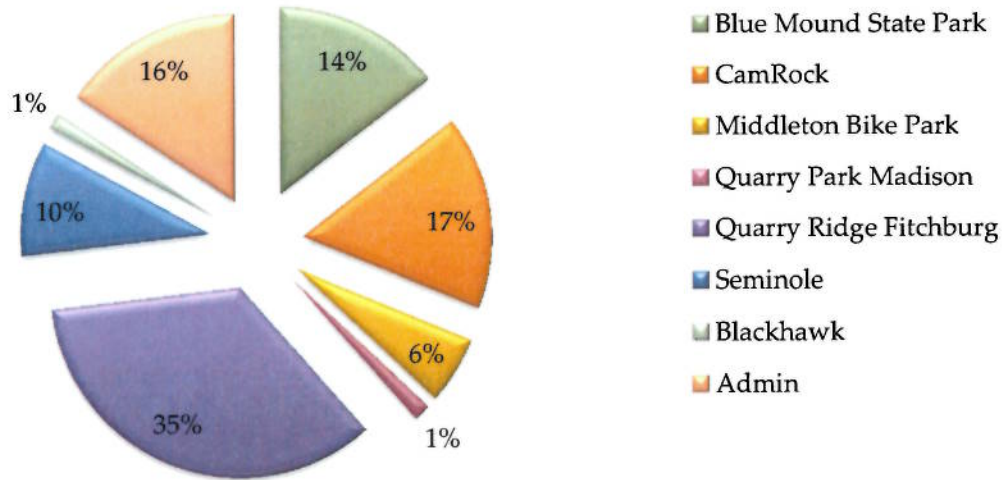
Ryan Kleimenthagen, Barneveld, WI



We recognize the challenges faced by our parks system in the shrinking budget environment and we understand as time goes on volunteer labor will become more vital for the preservation of our beloved park. In 2015 CORP members have volunteered over 2,873 hours to local parks and trails and have donated over 450 hours to BMSP alone. With the generally accepted value of volunteer hours at \$27.03/hour our members are responsible for a time donation valued at over \$12,163! In other words, our donated labor is equal to one full time seasonal summer employee.



2015 CORP Volunteer Hour Distribution



Distribution of CORP volunteer labor among CORP managed properties.

I have mountain biked as well as helped maintain the trails there for over 6 years. This is the only reason I have visited this park. If the trails become closed to mountain bikes I will have no reason to travel to the park from the Chicago land area. It would be unfortunate to see a major part of the trail system closed and I am certain that I would not be the only patron to park lost because of this.

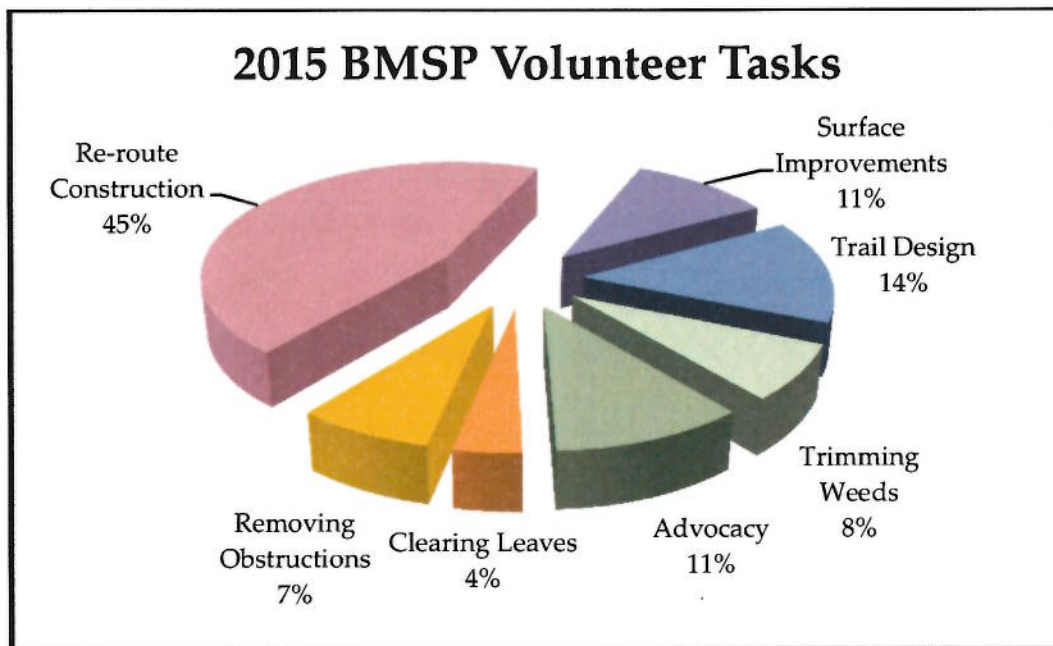
Wesley Lanper, Chicago, IL (formerly of Madison, WI)



Volunteering at BMSP

While many volunteer efforts such as our annual sponsored work days or partnership with REI are easy to see while they happen the majority of volunteering occurs in small groups without fanfare or acknowledgement.

With all of our trail systems we find the majority of our volunteer resources are spent performing trail maintenance. These tasks not only include the routine activities such as clearing deadfalls, trimming and cutting brush, mowing edges and similar chores, it also includes significant work on our oldest trails that require improved drainage, upgrades to the trail tread and when necessary, minor and major reroutes to site the trails in more desirable locations that not only improve their sustainability, but offer a higher quality trail riding experience.



Distribution of Volunteer Tasks at Blue Mound State Park in 2015



Volunteers Prepare for 2015 REI Workday

In 2015 our largest volunteer engagement was focused on the re-routes of the Holy Schist trail segments which had suffered long term erosion damage and were located in sub-prime locations causing sustained muddy conditions which necessitated the prolonged closure of the trail in the spring. These necessary re-routes resulted in new sustainable trail which has been observed to hold less water and has garnered rave reviews from users.

I'm a big fan of Blue Mound and go there regularly to hike, mountain bike, and trail run. I support EXPANDING trails there, not closing them. Sustainability is easy for trails when it is permitted and there are volunteers to implement it. Right now Blue Mound only has one of those.

Stephen Bettwy, Sussex, WI



Why Singletrack

You can hop on any old bike, bump along a cattle track and call it off-roading, but if you really want to know what mountain biking should feel like, you need to ride singletrack. Singletrack trails provide a unique way to experience our natural resources up close and personal by taking you to beautiful places where you can view wildflowers, wild life and undisturbed natural features. It's not even just the scenery, singletrack trail users experience silence. This sort of beauty and serenity is something you can only find when you escape to singletrack trails. Singletrack is the most sought after type of mountain bike trail. BMSP singletrack trails contrast with double track, fire road, cross country ski, rail or multi use trails which are wide enough for four wheel off-road vehicles.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking provides a great opportunity for recreation. When you're biking, and you're focused on the ride, there is no room in your brain to think about that fight you had with your mom, the new project the boss assigned at the last minute, or what you're going to do about that weed bed in the back yard you call a garden. Biking is an escape from all that. When you're on the bike, the bike and the ride are all that you think about.

Mountain biking has been consistently identified as the second most popular outdoor activity (hiking is number one), is growing in popularity and has been identified as a primary driver for park visits. Mountain biking appeals to a wide socio-economic range from highly educated professionals, to trades professionals and students; these people come together to form a community based on a love of the outdoors and volunteer spirit of trail building. Cyclists give back to their local trail systems by volunteering on public land, protecting the environment and preserving open space. CORP volunteers average over 450 volunteer hours on the BMSP trail system each year.

The majority of cyclists are responsible, considerate riders. Contrary to the extreme stunts which are popular on the internet and the extreme sport culture, mountain bikers are travelling at average speeds below 7 mi / hour. While there are risks associated with all sports, mountain biking is comparable in minor injury rates to skiing or team sports

Biking is a great way to stay in shape. It provides a combination of high and medium to low intensity cardio workouts, allows you to build muscle, and works your core and arms too. With the rise in sedentary lifestyles and obesity in society today, mountain biking provides another method for people to engage in physical activity while enjoying nature.

One Trail

Many Opportunities

- ✓ Hiking
- ✓ Mountain Biking
- ✓ Trail Running
- ✓ Birding
- ✓ Backpacking
- ✓ Snow Shoeing
- ✓ Wildlife Viewing
- ✓ Winter Biking



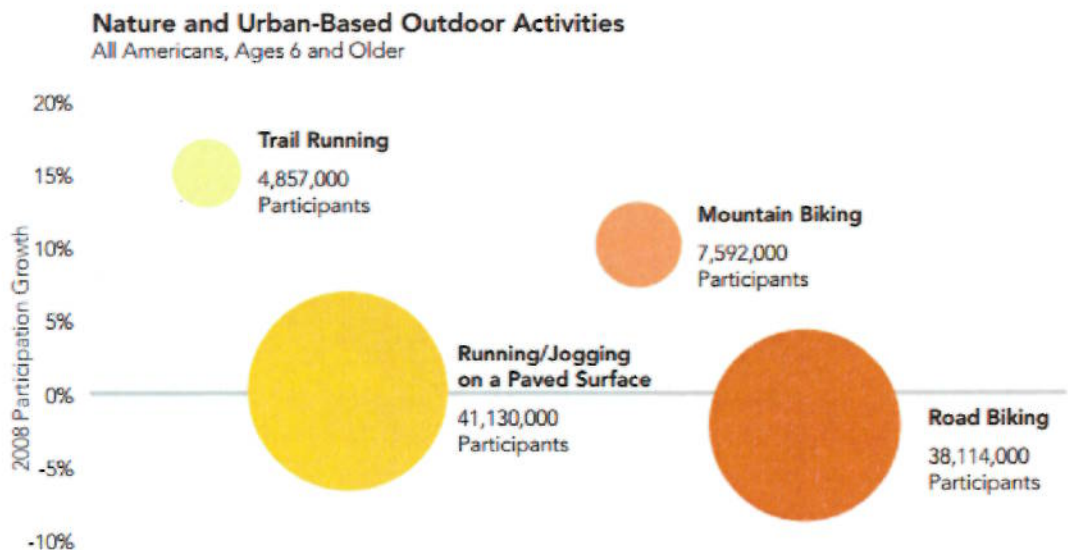
Economic Impacts of Mountain Biking

Mountain bike trails are good for the community, they provide much needed injections of tourist dollars to rural locations and cash strapped government parks. The 2010 WI DOT study "Economic Impact of Bicycling in Wisconsin" determined that mountain bike users spend upwards of \$60/day during trips to singletrack trails. The same study also found of the \$1.3 million in revenue generated by the sale of trail passes over half or \$650,000 was a result of park and trail users desire to bicycle in the state park system.

A survey administered as part of the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan found that 48% of adults surveyed bicycled for recreation (and 21% specifically mountain biking). And the "Profile of Visitors on the Bike Trails of Western Wisconsin" found that 64% of visitors surveyed were in the area to bike on the trails.

Growth Opportunities

A comparison of nature-based outdoor activities and their urban-based outdoor counterparts reveals the significant opportunities that exist for introducing more Americans to the joys of nature-based recreation. While participation in running, jogging and biking on roads or paved surfaces all remained relatively flat or decreased in 2008, their popularity still far exceeds that of trail running and mountain biking. The current pool of road runners and road bikers are all likely targets for advocates of nature-based outdoor recreation.





Trail Running

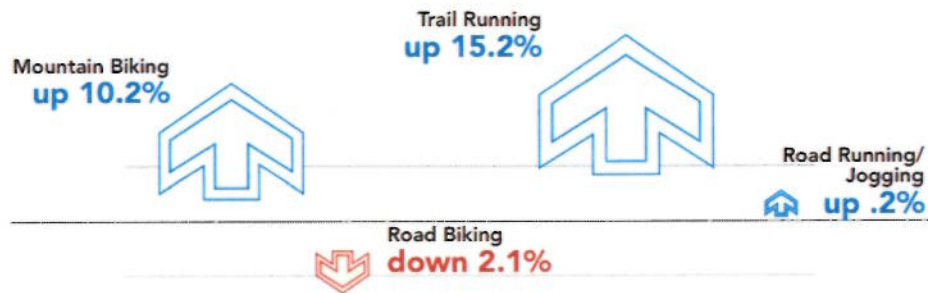
Trail Running is a sport which consists of running and hiking over trails. It takes place primarily on hiking trails where the participant can experience much larger ascents and descents and technical terrain. As Americans strive to incorporate daily exercise into their schedule, trail running provides a uniquely rewarding outdoor experience that gives participants an opportunity to escape the urban and suburban environments as well as stay fit.

According to the 2010 Outdoor Industry Foundation special report on Trail Running over 4.8 million Americans ages 6 and older participated in trail running in 2009 and trail running participants made 153.7 million outings, averaging 31.8 days per participant. Trail running has experienced steady growth in recent years and is a largely underserved recreational user population within Wisconsin State Parks.

A Return to Nature

While participation in team sports and indoor fitness activities remained largely unchanged in 2008, participation in nature-based outdoor activities, in many cases, increased significantly. Activities like backpacking, mountain biking and trail running showed double-digit increases in participation, and hiking and camping showed 9 percent and 7 percent increases, respectively.

These increases are particularly notable when participation trends in nature-based activities are compared to trends in their urban-based outdoor counterparts. While participation in bicycling and running on roads or paved surfaces decreased or remained relatively flat, participation in mountain biking and trail running both increased over 10 percent.





Winter Biking

Winter biking is the fastest growing outdoor recreation opportunity in Wisconsin. With our ideal winter conditions and established trail systems this sport has the opportunity to be a serious revenue driver for our state parks. BMSP is known across the Midwest as one of the premier locations for winter biking. Winter biking is allowed on our singletrack trails. Currently, grooming for winter biking is performed by hand by volunteers. Ideally, we would like to procure a winter bike groomer for use in BMSP.



A fatbike, also called a fat bike or wide tire bike, is a bicycle with over-sized tires, typically 3.8 in (97 mm) or larger and rims 2.6 in (66 mm) or wider, designed for low ground pressure to allow riding on soft unstable terrain, such as snow and sand. Fatbikes are built around frames with wide forks and stays to accommodate the wide rims required to fit these tires. The wide tires can be used with inflation pressures as low as 5 psi (340 hPa) to allow for a smooth ride over rough obstacles. A rating of 8–10 psi (550–690 hPa) is suitable for the majority of riders.

Fatbikes were invented for winter trail riding and racing in sub-arctic Alaska on the Iditarod Trail and simultaneously, for touring the deserts of New Mexico. They are extremely versatile bikes, capable of traversing diverse terrain types including snow, sand, desert, bogs, mud, pavement, or traditional mountain biking trails. The popularity of winter fat biking has dramatically increased in the past five years. Wisconsin and BMSP are home to some of the best fat biking opportunities in the world.

As the popularity of fatbikes has expanded, fatbike specific events (races, race series, tours, and festivals) have emerged. Examples include the annual Global Fatbike Summit (since 2012), the Fatbike Birkie race which is part of the Great Lakes Fatbike Series (2014-2015 season: 8 races held across 3 states), the US Open Fatbike Beach Championships (inaugural, 2015), the USA Cycling Fat Bike National Championship (inaugural, 2015), and the 45Nth Fatbike Triple Crown race series.

Ken Blake-Shell breaks down winter grooming for fat bike use in his January 22, 2014 post for Fat-Bike.com:

What is Good Fat-Bike Trail Grooming?

This seems like such an obvious question but in reality there is a lot more to it than just compacting fresh snow. How wide is optimal? How firm does the trail need to be? How much fresh powder is too much? What are the different things groomers are doing out there to the trail?



Width

There is a lot of debate out there about what is the perfect width for trail grooming. Some people love the challenge of riding a 6" wide strip while others want more width so they don't have to worry about falling off the trail all the time. Most dedicated fat-bike trails are being groomed somewhere in the range of 18"-40" wide. There are a ton of factors that go into this but the width of the trail corridor (distance between the trees or other features that border the trail) and how tight corners are greatly determines what type of vehicle can be used to groom. For instance, a tracked ATV is close to 40" wide and can't get down a lot of singletrack trails but a Rokon 2-wheel drive motorcycle can do down most any trail a bike can. The width of the groomed trail is largely going to be determined by the vehicle pulling the grooming implement. Regardless of if you are pulling a groomer under your own power or using a motorized vehicle, you typically want to mostly cover up the tracks made by the vehicle, leaving a consistent tread behind.



This is a drag used on the Traverse City trails. Note the surfaces to move snow outboard, then inboard before compaction.

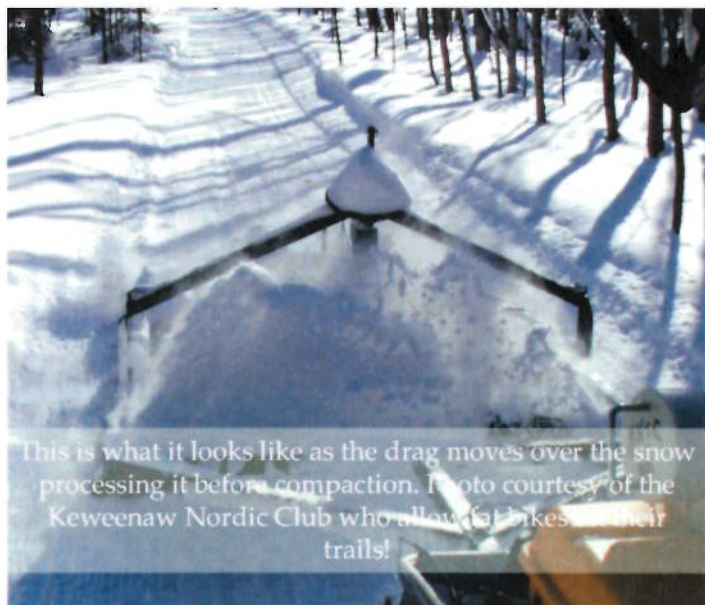
The width you groom at isn't the actual width of rideable trail. If the trail is in a high snowfall area, over time the compacted snow builds up and you ride down a "wall" of compacted snow, surrounded by powder. Even though the snow is compacted across its full width, the snow will start to collapse when you get near the edge of the groomed trail, spitting you off into the powder. Another factor is that the groomer most likely isn't going to be able to go down the same exact path every single time so there will be some variability side-to-side with how things are packed resulting in softer trail edges. Lastly, the line that the groomer takes isn't necessarily the line that riders will want to take because of momentum and flow on the bike. Having some trail width to select a line can be nice. Depending on your snow conditions and packed depth, all of these factors add up so that your 30" groomed trail may only produce a 20" wide strip of nice rideable trail. Groom wider than you think is necessary and a line will develop with fatty traffic.

Firmness

Another big factor in good grooming is how firm the trail is. Firm is fast and fun. For a lot of snow conditions, getting a firm trail takes a lot more than just compacting the snow. Anyone that has tried to climb a hill in compacted snow that isn't bonding well will be familiar with the "buzzsaw" effect where your tire just spins and digs a hole into trail. Well-groomed trail will be both densely compacted and the snow will hold together enough for good traction.



Typically fresh snow consists of a bunch of crystals that are fairly sharp and large. Because of this crystalline structure, the snow won't compact well and the crystals won't bond together because there isn't much contact area between crystals. It is similar to a container of rocks with a bunch of space in between the rocks. Big snow crystals will still have a large amount of air in them. If you can break apart the snow crystals or "knock the air out" using groomer speak, you get better compaction and bonding, improving the firmness of the trail.



This is what it looks like as the drag moves over the snow processing it before compaction. Photo courtesy of the Keweenaw Nordic Club who allow fat bikes on their trails!

Beyond just breaking down snow crystals, another way to improve the firmness of snow is to mix fresh (big crystals) and old snow (broken up crystals). Going back to the container of rocks analogy, this is like mixing sand in with the bigger rocks thereby filling some of the airspace. Having a mixture of big and small snow crystals not only increases density, but also is a great environment for snow crystals to bond.

There are a variety of ways to knock air out of snow. Just compacting snow will break down snow crystals somewhat but most grooming implements also try to move the snow around and thereby break up the crystals before compacting it.

There are tons of ways to do this through "tillers," teeth/knives and different surfaces that move the snow around can be used. How much the snow gets "worked" needs to be controlled depending on snow type. If you have snow that bonds easily (aka good snowball conditions), it may pack up on these working surfaces and gunk up the groomer instead of getting laid down on the trail tread. This is part of the reason why a lot of groomers use different grooming implements based upon snow conditions.

Lastly, firmness improves over time because snow crystals have time to bond together. Freshly groomed trail will be a lot firmer if it sits for an hour (minimally) or overnight.

Trail Texture and Fixing the Trail

The last major component to well-groomed fat-bike trail is the smoothness and flow of the trail. Anyone that has ridden a trail after a thaw/freeze cycle and the trail is bumpy and rutted knows the importance of a smooth trail. Ideally a groomer will be able to fix these icy bumps, divots and ruts. All of those ways described above that snow can be worked to break down crystals can also help to fix bumpy trail by breaking up the snow/ice and laying it back down. Some grooming implements are really good at removing the tops of bumps and depositing snow in depressions. Other implements specialize in breaking up or scouring an icy trail so there is some traction.



Groomed Singletrack



Proposal Preparation & Disclaimer

This proposal was written and produced entirely by unpaid volunteers; while we have made every effort to provide accurate estimates and descriptions in light of the accelerated timing and quickly evolving nature of the Draft Master Plan Amendment process and we anticipate variations and updates as the project proceeds.

Authors:

Patricia Kapinos

Walter Hougas

Gary Schweisthal



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ManWin Trails: Introducing a New Silent Sports Trail System

Manitowish Waters, WI – The North Lakeland Discovery Center, a non-profit nature center located in Manitowish Waters, is pleased to announce the establishment of a new silent sports trail system: the WinMan Trails. Located just north of the Discovery Center, bordering the towns of Winchester and Manitowish Waters, the WinMan Trails complement the Discovery Center's existing 12 mile trail system by offering additional recreational opportunities that allow visitors to further connect with and appreciate the character of the Northwoods.

The WinMan Trails span over 1300 acres of private and public recreation lands within the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest, offering opportunities for mountain biking, trail running, skate and classic skiing, and snowshoeing, as well as competitive silent sport events. The trail system encompasses pre-existing trails, including old logging roads and the Town of Winchester's old ski trail system (maintained by the Town of Winchester into the early eighties), as well as newly established single-track mountain bike trails.

Active in the development of the WinMan Trails are Discovery Center staff including a trail crew led by Trail Designer, Travis Bellman; Trail Coordinator, Robert Polic; and Outdoor Recreation and Events Specialist, Maria Kopecky. The project is made possible through funding from The Gering Foundation, as well as in-kind volunteer time and donations from area businesses and individuals. The WDNR's proposed Master Plan calls for a land use agreement between the Discovery Center and the state, and advocates for multi-use recreation.

Bellman, who was active in trail development at Oneida County's Raven Trail, has participated in training and workshops with the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) and is using these experiences to develop a sustainable trail system at WinMan Trails. Bellman is excited about the opportunities the trails will provide for the community and recreation enthusiasts. He particularly noted how conducive the terrain is throughout the site, stating: "The natural topography and geology of the WinMan Trails allow for sustainably built single-track trails that accommodate all ability levels, from beginners to expert mountain bikers. This variety will draw a more diverse tourist base to the area."

Robert Polic, WinMan Trails Coordinator and avid mountain biker and skier, notes that the Master Plan goals for the site include the establishment of 10 miles of single-track mountain bike trails, two miles of technical mountain bike features, and over seven miles of skate and classic ski trails. Groomed snowshoe loops will also be available, ideal for casual users as well as for future snowshoe races.

Volunteer and community involvement and support are a vital piece of the trail's future success. According to Outdoor Recreation and Events Specialist, Maria Kopecky, the WinMan Master Plan includes the development of a Friends Group to act as future stewards of the site: "The Discovery Center is fortunate to have a variety of engaged Clubs that carry forward missions and purposes compatible with the Center's, including groups dedicated to bird conservation, wolf education, and old-growth forest preservation. A group connected to silent sports recreation and stewardship of an ecologically unique site, would be a wonderful addition to the community, the region, and to an expanding community of silent sports enthusiasts."

Press Release Archives

[November 2015](#)[October 2015](#)[April 2014](#)[March 2014](#)[February 2014](#)[January 2014](#)[October 2013](#)[September 2013](#)[August 2013](#)[July 2013](#)[June 2013](#)

A trail introduction is scheduled for Saturday, October 5, from 10:30am-1pm. This free community event, held in conjunction with IMBA's Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day, encourages local residents and families to to experience 1.5 miles of completed single-track mountain bike trails, and to explore some of what the trails will offer in the future. Activities are for all ages and ability levels and include free food and drink, guided hikes, trail bike rides, and single-track mountain bike rides. Attendees participating in Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day are encouraged to bring their own mountain bikes; children's bikes (approximately ages 8 and up) will be available for use.

The WinMan Trails are located four miles north of Manitowish Waters on Highway W. The trailhead and parking lot are across from the intersection of Highways W and J. To learn more about the WinMan Trails, volunteer opportunities, and events and sponsorship opportunities, please visit us online under the clubs tab at DiscoveryCenter.net, "like" the WinMan Trails on Facebook, or call (877) 543-2085.

By [Manitowish Waters](#) | September 17th, 2013 | [Uncategorized](#) | [0 Comments](#)

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December 16, 2015

10/3/2014 7:30:00 AM

Blazing Trails: WinMan offers mountain bikers thrills for all skill levels



Ryan Matthews
Outdoors Reporter

Wisconsin's Northwoods is quickly becoming a premiere destination for cycling. Recreational cyclists are riding paved trails that leisurely wind along our highways. Gravel grinders are putting in long miles on the Bearskin Trail. And now, those seeking something on the wild side can get their fix at the WinMan Trails.

The WinMan Trails are located on private and state owned land between Winchester and Manitowish Waters on the east side of Highway W just south of where it intersects with Highway J.

The trails were made possible by the generosity of a private landowner who owns 360 acres of land which the WinMan Trails manage. The trails were built on land through Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law (MFL) program. Being on MFL land means that WinMan may not charge fees for trail use. "Just show up and ride," Trails Coordinator Robert Polic said.

WinMan Trials is an affiliated organization administered by North Lakeland Discovery Center. In spring 2014, the trails team began redoing some of the work previously undertaken while also blazing new trails to expand WinMan's offerings. "There are two of us that are employed through the Discovery Center. And then this summer we had an intern from Stevens Point," Pollic said.

The trails have all been built and managed by this team of three. First the team plans and designs the trails, then they mark the proposed path with orange ribbon on trees through the forest. Travis Bellman, WinMan trails builder, uses a mini excavator to rough out the trail and then a walk-behind bulldozer to flatten things out. Bellman dumps extra dirt in places that will be molded into features like rollers, table tops and jumps. Finally, the team applies the finishing touches with shovels and rakes.

What appears to be a simple dirt path is actually a complicated and meticulously planned system facilitating maximum water drainage and minimum ongoing maintenance. Trail design is as much about managing weather as it is about solving a complex physics equation.

The team's goal with the trails is to allow a biker to navigate from top to bottom without needing to apply the brakes, an element they refer to as "flow." Proper flow is only achievable with precisely graded berms around corners, down drops and up hills.

This past spring, WinMan Trails invited a professional mountain bike trail developer from Minneapolis to help design portions of the trail and offer feedback and suggestions. The result is a comfortably wide single-track experience that compliments the riding style of expert and novice riders alike. Thrill seekers looking for maximum airtime and speed will not be left in want; those trying mountain biking for the first time need not fear for their lives.

What makes WinMan unique?

The single-track trails start out fairly flat and easy, allowing riders to warm up and get their bearings before



Robert Polic shows different feature routes. Route A is flat, Route B presents a challenging rock course. (Ryan Matthews/Lakeland Times)

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rolling into a large natural wooded bowl bisected by serpentine single-track. Trail features are split into A and B paths allowing riders to determine the difficulty of their ride. While the A path of a feature may gingerly roll, the B path may contain a steep rock shelf.

A couple of the trail's signature features include an enormous berm wrapping around a hairpin turn which local riders refer to as the "toilet bowl," bridges made from local cedars, a rolling boardwalk, balance boards, rock features, gaps and flattops. The WinMan offers mountain bikers more than six miles of single-track and a combined five miles of logging roads.

In addition to mountain biking trails, WinMan offers trails for hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and winter fat biking. Fat bikes made their commercial debut around 2005 with Surly's creation of the Pugsly. Since then, the demand has grown for bikes with tires over 3.5 inches wide designed to tackle snow, sand and other previously unridable obstacles. Though Quality Bicycle Products in Minneapolis still has the lion share of brands offering fat bike options, larger manufacturers such as Specialized and Trek have come out with their own inflated iterations. The WinMan is currently one of the only trail systems in Wisconsin offering dedicated winter fat bike trails.

The trails are quickly becoming a well-known destination trail system for mountain bikers and trail enthusiasts with potential economic benefits for local businesses. Recreational opportunities like this bring people from out of town who will support small businesses, Polic said.

The WinMan Trails have plans for expansion on all of its trails slated for 2015. With its growing popularity, WinMan Trails is considering the addition of bathrooms and a permanent shelter at the trailhead. To undertake this growth, the team is planning to form a WinMan Trails Club for those wanting to help with maintenance and upkeep of the trails.

For more information on the WinMan Trails or to help in its construction and maintenance, contact Robert Polic at trails@discoverycenter.net.

WinMan Trails will be hosting its second annual Take Your Kid Mountain Biking day Sunday, Oct. 5, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ryan Matthews may be reached at rmatthews@lakelandtimes.com.

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